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Preparatory Committee
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Geneva, 19-30 April 1993
Agenda item 5

STATUS OF PREPARATION OF PUBLICATIONS, STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Statement by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation

The attention of the Preparatory Committee is drawn to the attached statement submitted by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category II), entitled "Worldwide resurgence of anti-Semitism and the concluding statement of the World Conference".

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WORLDWIDE RESURGENCE OF ANTISEMITISM AND THE CONCLUDING STATEMENT OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE

1. The emphasis of the World Conference will be oriented toward future action and the improvement of the current mechanisms promoting human rights. Therefore, the World Conference will not be dealing with an analysis of current violations, which is more properly the task of the Commission on Human Rights.

2. However, the rise of ideologies of hatred and exclusion in many parts of the world should be addressed in the final outcome of the World Conference. The growth of these ideologies - and the recent widespread actions linked to them - are an indication of the need for increased educational programmes promoting mutual respect, tolerance and moderation.

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3. The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) remains convinced that the persistence and resurgence of antisemitism - one of the oldest and most virulent forms of racism known to human history - should be explicitly addressed in the conclusions of the World Conference. In September, IFOR submitted a recommendation on this subject to the third session of the Preparatory Committee. (A/CONF.157/PC/46/Add.9)

4. Aside from the examples provided in our earlier written statement, submitted to the Sub-Commission at its forty-fourth session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/NGO/22), we wish to highlight some examples of the manner in which this specific ideological hatred is propagated and even taught in schools.

5. The persistent resurgence of the "Blood Libel" accusation against Jews and Judaism must be monitored and reprimanded. We referred to several examples of this phenomenon in our 11 February 1993 oral statement to the forty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights. (E/CN.4/1993/SR.17)

6. Another myth consists in the belief that a Jewish-led conspiracy seeks to control the world. The most widespread of these "conspiracy theories of history" is propagated through the century-old forgery, The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, one of the "theories" that contributed to Hitler's radical antisemitism.

7. In a second oral statement on 19 February (E/CN.4/1993/SR.28), IFOR provided further details of the spread of such "theories", particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. The long history and the current pernicious use of this crude forgery was recently analysed in a two-volume monumental work by the French scholar and sociologist, Pierre-André Taguieff: (Les Protocols des Sages de Sion: Faux et Usages d'un Faux, Paris, Berg International, 1992).

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8. French orientalist Olivier Carré's recent study shows that school handbooks in Saudi Arabia portray the Jews as the "enemies of humanity" and reiterate that the Jews seek to destroy Islam. (L'utopie islamique dans l'Orient arabe, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, Paris, 1991, p.107 and pp.131-132) This is not the only Middle East country where similar ideological hatreds are inculcated and propagated. In such cases we are faced with the same attitude, expressed twenty-five years ago by the then Syrian Minister of Education, Suleyman Al-Khash, in a letter of 3 May 1968 to the then Director-General of UNESCO, Mr René Maheu: "The hatred which we indoctrinate into the minds of our children from their birth is sacred." (A-Thaura, journal of the Ba'ath party, Damascus, 3 May 1968)

9. On 1 June 1991, the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a stamp to commemorate "World Child Year". It shows a boy of under ten years old smashing a blue window depicting a blue Star of David, a recognized symbol of Judaism. Although this stamp was condemned by the European Parliament and the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP) requested that it be withdrawn, the stamp is still listed in the latest Iranian Catalogue of Commemorative Stamps. It can be viewed at the United Nations Philatelic Museum of the Palais des Nations in Geneva, where it was not displayed with other "World Child Day" stamps. IFOR gave full details in its oral Statement to the Commission on 3 March. (E/CN.4/1993/SR.52)

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10. IFOR has already drawn attention to the resurgence of antisemitism in Central and Eastern Europe in a written statement prepared by historian Robert Wistrich, which was submitted to the last Sub-Commission. (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/NGO/22) In this context, a recent unfortunate development in Croatia illustrates the grave dangers when national leaders use historical distortions to guide their people.

11. Professor Wistrich pointed out that President Franjo Tudjman, in his book Wastelands of Historical Reality (1989), had reduced the number of Jewish victims of the Holocaust to one million and accused the Jews of having "taken the initiative in preparing and provoking not only individual atrocities but also the mass slaughter of non-Jews, communists, partisans and Serbs."

12. This total distortion of known historical facts, for which President Tudjman made honorable amends last year, has recently been given a new life by the plans of the authorities in Zagreb to rename one of the capital's streets after Mile Budak, the former N° 2 of the independent fascist Croatian state, which was headed by the notorious Ante Pavelic during the Second World War. Mile Budak, its former Vice-Minister and Minister of Religion and Education, was executed in 1945 as a war criminal. He is still considered by the remnant of the Jewish community in Zagreb to have been one of the masterminds behind the extermination of 75% of the country's Jewish population. (Le Figaro, 24 March, 1993)

13. Neo-Nazi video "games" are now proliferating in Europe. Full details on these monstrosities - including extermination camps called "Auschwitz" - were provided by Albert Kaufmann, a teacher in a secondary school at Graz in Austria, in his statement on 24 June 1992, made at an International Conference held at UNESCO in Paris. ("Educating for Tolerance: The Case of Resurged Antisemitism")

14. A recent case in Switzerland might serve as an example of the importance of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding. In recent articles and correspondence in the press (The Jerusalem Post, édition française, séléction hebdomadaire, 16 au 22 décembre 1993; La Tribune d'Israël, janvier-février 1993), two handbooks on religious instruction in the Suisse Romande, for teachers of children from ten to eleven years old were critized by historian Paul Giniewski for inculcating a "teaching of contempt" of both Jews and the Jewish religion.

15. Mutual comprehension and attempts to find an acceptable solution have been engaged by several bodies with the competent authorities of the Canton of Vaud. It is expected that before the Preparatory Committee ends its forth session on 30 April - or before the World Conference meeting next June in Vienna - the Département de l'Instruction Publique et des Cultes of the Canton of Vaud will have resolved this issue globally, involving the unintended inculcation of antisemitism through religious teaching in public schools.

16. We have provided in this recommendation our concern in one particular field only. Special efforts should be made to monitor expressions of such ideologies in all parts of the world and remedial measures taken. IFOR feels strongly that all ideologies of hatred and exclusion must be addressed at the World Conference.